

TOWN OF GILL

MASSACHUSETTS



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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 17, 2010

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m.

Present: Ann Banash, Nancy Griswold, and John Ward, Selectboard members; Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant

Guests: David Detmold, Montague Reporter; Doug Smith, BGL Snowmobile Club

Snowmobile Use on Mariamante Property: Doug Smith, a Gill resident and member of the Bernardston-Gill-Leyden Snowmobile Club spoke on behalf of the Club's request for permission to resume use of the trail that crosses the Mariamante field. The Club desires the use because the trail is currently their only means of access to the gas station on Route 2. The trail is also the only route for their trail grooming equipment, which is stored at the Spaulding residence, to reach their network of trails.

Ray explained that he informed Doug Harris of the Narragansett Tribe of the request as a gesture of cooperation and respect. According to Doug Harris, the Tribes will not object to the use of the trail for the 2009-2010 winter, but likely would not favor such use next winter. He indicated the property has been identified as a possible location of Native American burials and/or ceremonial features, and the Tribes feel the property should be treated with the appropriate level of deference and respect.

The Board granted the Club's request to use the trail, but strongly encouraged the Club to find alternate routes before the 2010-2011 winter. Doug Smith left the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Nancy, seconded by John, to approve the minutes from 2/1, and 2/3. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Invoices for Gill Elementary School Well: Ray presented three invoices totaling \$3,080 from Letourneau Electric for additional parts and labor in conjunction with last year's DEP-mandated project to upgrade and relocate the control system for the water well at the elementary school. The project was bid at \$1,650, a price that included the re-use of as many controls, valves, and other components as possible. Ray and Mick LaClaire met with Paul Letourneau, Lynn Bassett, Bob Flaherty, and Steve Roberto at the school on February 16th to get a better understanding of the additional work that was required.

After the original project was complete, the re-used well pump control station failed, and needed to be replaced. The failure was likely due to a combination of age and reduced resilience when put into service with other new components of the project. The replacement control station also failed. The electrician spent several hours troubleshooting the failure, but ultimately could not find a cause. The control station manufacturer does not offer a warranty. The system is now functioning properly, and with payment of the invoices and acceptance of the work, the project will be covered by the electrician's own one-year warranty.

The Board approved the three invoices for payment, in the amounts of \$1,650, \$837.50, and \$592.50. There was then discussion about what future expenses could be expected related to the well. The most immediate possible expense is a chlorination system (approx \$5,500), which would probably be required by DEP the next time the water

tests positive for coliform bacteria. The well has a history of positive tests, although there is usually only a single positive during any given year. In 2009, possibly due to the wetter-than-normal spring, there was more than one positive test, and the well, considered a "public water supply", is now on the DEP's watch list.

If a chlorination system is required, it is likely that DEP would also require the Town to locate the source of the coliform bacteria. Many possibilities were discussed – cracks in the buried water lines between the school building and the wellhead, cracks at the wellhead, surface runoff to the well recharge area, and the groundwater table.

The Board asked Ray to research the matter further, and to look into the availability of grants that could help pay for investigation and remediation.

FY11 Fuel Oil Lock-in: As a follow-up to the discussion on 2/1, Ray projected next year's fuel oil usage at 6,000 gallons, equal to this year's expected total. He recommended locking in 3,600 gallons, carrying over 1,200 gallons expected to be leftover from this year, and buying the remaining 1,200 gallons at market price at the time of delivery. The Board approved the recommendation.

FY11 Budget Schedule: The Board reviewed the revised schedule for the FY11 budget development process, as outlined on the meeting's agenda. Ray reported that department budget spreadsheets had been distributed via email the night before, 2/16. Ann recommended, with agreement from Nancy and John, that Ray send a follow-up email explaining that the three funding scenarios (level, -5%, and -10%) be prepared assuming level salary costs, and that the proposed 3% COLA be added to the totals. This method makes it so the departments do not have to cut (or cut deeper) their expenses (and services provided to residents) in order to pay for a COLA.

Cable Access Equipment Purchase Order: Rick James, member of the Cable Access Committee and videographer for most Board meetings, presented a purchase order totaling \$5,531.95 for a professional-grade camcorder and related equipment. The equipment list was prepared with assistance from Robin Mide at MCTV. It will allow Gill to be more self-sufficient for its video productions, and to borrow less from MCTV. The proposed camcorder is portable, so that functions at other Gill venues can be taped. Funds for the purchase will come from the PEG Access account, which has over \$10,000 in it.

Rick explained that with an additional \$3,000 of equipment (mostly wall-mounted cameras and switching controls), the upstairs room at Town Hall could be outfitted as a studio, which would provide better quality recordings of Town Meetings and other functions. The Board was receptive to the additional expense, but Ray suggested waiting on that purchase until more information is known about energy efficiency work that may take place in or above the room.

A motion was made by Nancy, seconded by John, to approve the purchase order for an amount up to \$6,000. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. The Board also directed Ray to write a letter to MCTV thanking them for the training and assistance they have provided, as well as for the use of their equipment.

Highway Department Front-End Loader: Highway Superintendent Mick LaClaire appeared before the Board to explain the need for the replacement of the 18-year old Case loader. It has over 8,100 hours on it and has never been rebuilt. The transmission is sluggish and slipping and there is a water leak that indicates the need to replace the head gasket. Two of the tires are 12-years old and need to be replaced. (The other two tires required emergency replacement 3 weeks ago.)

Mick presented information about five new models that he investigated: Volvo, Case, Caterpillar, Komatsu, and John Deere. Volvo and Case are not part of the state's bid, and received no further consideration. Highway employees tested the Caterpillar loader, and didn't care for it; it was also the most expensive of the three he priced.

The Komatsu is \$118,000, and the dealer will give \$18,000 for our trade-in. Northfield and Montague, as well as Davenport Construction all own and like their Komatsus. The John Deere is \$130,000, less \$16,500 for the trade-in. Erving and Leyden both own John Deeres. Highway employees tested both models; the John Deere is their preference, but the Komatsu also performed well and either would be a welcome addition to the fleet. Both models come with a 1-year bumper-to-bumper warranty, and the Komatsu dealer will also give a 5-year warranty on the loader arms to alleviate concerns about structural weakness of those parts. Delivery would be 4 – 6 weeks.

Mick explained that funding for the new loader could come from the \$218,000 in Chapter 90 funds the town already has. At least half of this money was reserved in prior years to use toward possible cost overruns during the Main Road project. That project came in under budget, and the reserve was not needed. The purchase of a loader is an allowed use of Chapter 90 funds. The Board questioned if there will be enough Ch. 90 money remaining to do the road maintenance projects that need to be done this year. Mick felt that there would be. The Town will learn of next year's allotment in May; hopefully it will be \$115,000, level-funded from this year.

Mick also presented information about the vintage 1974 sweeping broom that is used to remove winter sand from the roads in the springtime. It is falling apart, and almost past the point of further repair. A "Sweepster" broom attachment is available for either the John Deere or Komatsu - \$16,000 and \$13,800 respectively. Mick estimated the attachment would allow him to cut 1 ½ days from the pickup sweeper that is rented every year.

A motion was made by Nancy, seconded by John, to authorize the purchase of the Komatsu loader and Sweepster attachment, and to pay for it from Chapter 90 funds. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

There was discussion regarding the Main Road project, and whether there are still lingering problems in any areas. Mick feels most have been resolved, although during the heavy rainstorm in January, the extra grates the Town added to the catch basins near the North Gill Cemetery had to be removed. The grates were impeding water from entering the basins. There is concern that during heavy rains the trunk line pipe beneath the road is not large enough to handle all the runoff from the road plus that from the adjoining fields and hillsides. Mick left the meeting.

FRCOG Assessment for FY11: Ray reported that Gill's assessment from the FRCOG would increase by \$8,338 next year. A little more than half (\$4,667) is attributable to the Inspection Program, which was expected, and can be paid from the stabilization fund which was created for that purpose at last year's Annual Town Meeting. The Health Agent costs will go up by \$2,510, caused largely by extra time spent this year doing inspections for the summer camp program at NMH and for an unnecessarily drawn out lead paint abatement issue at an Oak Street residence. Ray explained that he will review both situations with the Board of Health, and there is the likelihood of issuing bills for services rendered. The Board of Health may also consider raising certain inspection fees for next year.

Lease of Boyle Lot with Dr. Zak: The Board reviewed a proposed a lease agreement between the Town and Dr. Frank Zak, resident of Lynn, MA and owner of the Zak Farm in Gill. The agreement is a renewal of the lease that expired December 31, 2009, and is for \$50.00 per year for the 3-year period of January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2012. The property being leased is the so-called Boyle Lot, of approximately two acres, located to the south of Town Hall on Center Road. The lease stipulates the property be used for cropland only.

A motion was made by John, seconded by Nancy, to renew the Boyle Lot lease with Dr. Zak for three years at \$50.00 per year. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

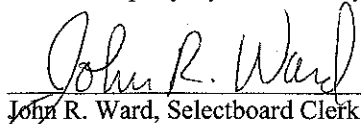
Personnel Committee COLA Recommendation: Ray presented the Personnel Committee's recommendation for a 3% COLA increase to employee salaries for FY11.

Conservation Commission Resignation: A letter was received from Ken Sprinkle, Chair of the Conservation Commission, announcing his resignation from the Commission effective April 15, 2010. A motion was made by Nancy, seconded by John, to accept the resignation with regret. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. The Board directed Ray to send a letter to Ken thanking him for his service to the Town.

Warrant #17: The Board reviewed and signed Warrant #17.

Adjourned: The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.



John R. Ward, Selectboard Clerk